

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project  
General Meeting at the Roanoke Public Library  
February 18, 2016**

7 people in attendance.

**AGENDA**

(5:30-6pm): gathering, food & drink, set-up  
(6-6:25pm): ARCHIVES  
(6:25-6:35pm): ORAL HISTORIES  
(6:35-6:40pm): Introductions  
(6:40-7:05pm): WALKING TOUR  
(7:05-7:15pm): DIGITAL EXHIBITION  
(7:15-7:20pm): PUBLIC RELATIONS  
(7:20-7:30pm): SEPTEMBER 2016 PLANS  
(7:30-7:40pm): Departure

**ARCHIVES**

- 1) DIGITAL ARCHIVES: GR provided updates on the Digital Archives initiative (<http://www.sscommons.org/openlibrary/welcome.html#3|collections|7730775||Southwest20Virginia20LGBTQ2B20History20Project||>)
  - a. Updates to the collection since our last meeting: five issues of *The Virginia Gayzette* from 1972.
  - b. Still to come: a few more *Virginia Gayzette* issues from 1972, plus three issues of the *Gayzette* from 1978. These are scanned and just need to be uploaded. We also now have permission to also upload relevant articles from *The Roanoke Times* and *The Roanoker*.
  - c. GR showed how the project website has been reformatted to give more prominence to the Digital Archives. Hopefully this increases web traffic to the archive.
    - i. GR will look into whether there is a way to track web traffic to the Archives, to see who is visiting and how they got there?
- 2) PHYSICAL ARCHIVES:
  - a. STATUS OF COLLECTION: Same status as last meeting. No new items donated since December (<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/physical-archives/>).
  - b. Upcoming ARCHIVES COLLECTION EVENTS: Following up on last meeting's discussion, we have done a lot of outreach to five different organizations in the valley to plan future Archives Collection Events. Here's what we've got:
    - i. INTIMATE PATH: DG reported on outreach to the IP group. A dialogue is underway, and hopefully two things will happen in the coming month:

1. GR should attend the next IP meeting to talk about the History Project
  2. DG will see if we can send a History Project informational notice out to the IP email list—to invite folks to participate in the project.
- ii. UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH: RW reported back on outreach to the UU’s LGBTQ group called “OUUT.” They are enthusiastic about participating in the project.
1. We should schedule an Archives Collection Event at the UU church on a Monday or Tuesday evening in early April. Let’s look at the calendar and then RW will work with them to book the date. (How about Tues, Apr. 5?)
  2. Also, MB offered to reach out to the UU church in Blacksburg to see if they are also interested in partnering with us.
- iii. THE PARK: GR reported on successful conversations with The Park about hosting a “Reunion”-themed collection event there, focused on inviting those who partied at The Park in earlier decades to come and donate historical items related to The Park.
1. Date: Wednesday, March 23, evening. GR needs to follow up to lock-in the time. We also need to think more about the format of the event, and hopefully start promoting it within the next week or so.
- iv. ROANOKE DIVERSITY CENTER: GR has approached the RDC Board and they have approved us doing another collection event there in March.
1. Date: Monday, March 14, 6-7:30pm.
  2. GR shared draft event language. Please share feedback on this language within 24 hours as we will begin promoting this event immediately!
  3. GR shared the draft “Thank you” letter, too, that we will use for collection events. If you have feedback/comments on the language of the letter, please contact GR quickly.
- v. METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH: GR has spoken with Rev. JC about the project and they are enthusiastic about us doing a collection event after church one Sunday.
1. Date: Sunday, April 24. Need to figure out exact time and format of the event.
- vi. TRAINING STUDENT VOLUNTEERS: GR will conduct a training on either February 29 or March 2, so that we are ready to go with our first event on March 14 at the RDC. The number of total trained students will be between 2 and 4.
- c. CONTEMPORARY COLLECTING: DG has contacted both *PRISM Magazine* and *Informative Q* magazine about donating copies of every

new issue to the Virginia Room. DG has also spoken with the Virginia Room about this, and they are onboard.

- i. New issues will not be catalogued as part of our LGBTQ History Collection, but will enter the library's general archives, as in the case of any other contemporary magazines and publications. (We should keep track of accessions, though, so that we can promote the preservation of these items as part of our project's initiative?)
- 3) Policy on THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS: Key members were absent for this discussion, so we have tabled it (again) for now and will put it on the agenda for March's meeting.

### **ORAL HISTORIES**

- 1) The Roanoke College IRB has approved our application. We're legal!
- 2) The INTERVIEWS are now underway!  
(<http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/oral-histories>).
  - a. WHO'S INVOLVED: We have 34 Roanoke College students and one professor (GR) conducting interviews with 16 interview subjects. (Our 16 interview subjects—making gross generalizations—are 9 cis queer men, 4 cis queer women, and 3 transwomen). (The student interviewers, on the other hand, are predominantly white cisgender straight women, 18-22 years old.)
  - b. RECORDINGS: All audio recordings should be complete by March 1.
  - c. TRANSCRIPTS: All written transcripts should be complete by March 22.
  - d. EDITING AND DEPOSITION: GR will then review and edit every transcript after March 22, with the goal of depositing the recordings and transcripts in the LGBTQ History Collection at the Virginia Room by May 1, 2016.
- 3) NEXT ROUND OF INTERVIEWS: We did not discuss. But the next round of interview subject recruitment is scheduled to begin in Fall 2016.

### **WALKING TOUR**

- 1) UPDATES: SM gave updates on her research for the Walking Tour. She has collected opening and closing dates for all of the prominent gay bars and restaurants on the walking tour. She has also collected several photographs, maps, tax documents, and other files related to these establishments.
- 2) TOUR SCRIPT: The tour script is available for everyone to view in Google Docs  
(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SiSZ5XyasKIIW5F0c55hhfDPTX>)

[RjCILSu9GZ-RVNYQA/edit?usp=sharing](https://www.writingworkbooks.com/feedback/RjCILSu9GZ-RVNYQA/edit?usp=sharing)). Please review and provide your critiques/comments.

- a. TOUR IS TOO LONG? We discussed how the tour may be too long at 2 miles / 2 hours. On the last test run (Jan. 24), we weren't even able to cover everything in 2 hours. This is a good reason for everyone to read the tour script and suggest cuts/edits to the script!
  - b. WHAT TO INCLUDE / EXCLUDE: Some members felt that the tour should include The Park (which is currently does not), and exclude Tradewinds. This may cut down the total length of the tour. Others made a passionate plea for Tradewinds. There was no consensus on what to add / what to cut.
  - c. TROLLEY / BUS TOURS: The idea of using mechanized transport for the tour came up. There was the proposal of a hybrid walking/bus tour. Mobility and stamina are definitely a concern.
    - i. Perhaps a solution is to offer "full" walking tours on several weekends, but also offer an "abridged" bus tour, too, specifically for those with limited mobility? The tour scripts would have to be different, though, as buses cannot stop as frequently as the walking tour does. We need to keep discussing these issues and brainstorm possible solutions.
    - ii. We could use a Roanoke College 12-passenger van at relatively no cost. Something to look into?
- 3) SCHEDULE OF ROLL-OUT:
- a. NEXT TEST-RUN: We aim to offer the next test-run of the tour on Sunday, April 10, 2-4pm for History Project members.
    - i. We aim to have all the laminated images ready by that date so that we can offer a full walking tour as we expect it to look/feel like when launched publicly in September.
  - b. PUBLIC LAUNCH: September 2016. There seems to be a majority opinion, over several meetings now, not to schedule the tour for Pride weekend itself, but rather on several weekends immediately after Pride, and/or maybe before. Let's look at the calendar and schedule, say, two walking tours on Sunday afternoons in September, plus a bus tour on a different Sunday afternoon. (See tentative schedule at the end of this document.)
  - c. SUBSEQUENT SCHEDULE OF TOURS: We did not discuss. Perhaps offer the tour once a month?
  - d. Create an ONLINE AUDIO WALKING TOUR: This is a great idea, and something to invest time and labor in once we have launched the physical walking/bus tour.

## **DIGITAL EXHIBITION**

- 1) We are using an open-source software called Timeline:JS (<https://timeline.knightlab.com>)
- 2) CONTENT: GR showed off the test site as of right now, which is password protected. The exhibit is tentatively titled “Coming Out: Gay Liberation in Roanoke, Virginia, 1970-1980.” GR and SM are still working on procuring images and other media for the exhibit.
- 3) NARRATIVE: GR is writing an opening “Overview” narrative for the exhibit that puts Roanoke’s 1970s gay history into national historical context. GR will send this text out to the group within the next week for comments and critique.
- 4) EXHIBITION BOOTH at PRIDE IN THE PARK: GR has tested out the Timeline exhibit on an iPad in Elmwood Park and discovered that the public WiFi is not strong enough to support our website. Therefore, we need to invest in not only an iPad and table mount for the tablet, but also a Data Plan that can give us fast-enough internet for use during Pride in the Park.
- 5) SCHEDULE OF ROLL-OUT:
  - a. FULL DRAFT FOR REVIEW: GR and SM will try to finish a full draft of the exhibition, including all text, images, and other media, by May 1. At that time, we will make a private link available to all History Project members so that they can review and comment on the draft. (We can also print out copies of each slide in the exhibit for those who would rather review a print copy.) From May to August, we can review and edit the exhibition until we get it just the way we want it.
  - b. PUBLIC LAUNCH: September 2016. We will not only present the exhibition at our History Project booth at Pride in the Park, but the exhibit will also launch on a new website, independent of our project website. Having a unique URL for the exhibition will allow people to easily send and share it via social media, etc.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- 1) PR IDEAS (ongoing and/or brainstormed):
  - a. ROANOKE TIMES: Reach out to the *Roanoke Times* about doing a story about the project? It was suggested that we should also reach out to local radio and television. But maybe we aren’t ready just yet for a major story about our project. June is Pride Month, so maybe we can hitch onto a story about Pride—linking it in with LGBTQ+ history?
  - b. DOCUMENTARY FILM about the project: we did not discuss this.
  - c. ROANOKE POLICE LGBTQ OUTREACH: DG has reached out to members of our community for info on who the LGBTQ liaison(s) are in the Roanoke City Police Department. These conversations are ongoing, and build out of our initial idea to reach out to the police for access to historical records in their department.

- d. UNITE VA MAGAZINE: SM is writing a piece for their next issue.
- e. PRISM MAGAZINE: We have a piece just published in their latest issue about the History Project!  
[\(http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/southwest-virginia-lgbtq-history-project-well-underway/\)](http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/southwest-virginia-lgbtq-history-project-well-underway/)

## **SEPTEMBER 2016 PLANS**

- 1) PRIDE WEEK
  - a. Need to reserve a booth for Pride in the Park
  - b. Need to design a banner (w/ logo?) for our booth and/or the Pride Parade
  - c. Design pamphlets to hand out at Pride about our project?
  - d. Launch the Walking Tour around Pride
  - e. Exhibit at Virginia Room during Pride Week?
    - i. We discussed how the Main Library is not even open on Sundays, plus also the issue of the Virginia Room's reluctance to put our materials out on public display (for preservation reasons, not because of their content... also the Main Library does not really have a set-up in place for presenting exhibits of archival materials.)
    - ii. We also discussed how we may not have the time or labor to organize a physical exhibit in time for September 2016... since we are already hard at work on our digital exhibit.
  - f. Digital exhibition presented at our Pride in the Park booth
  - g. Schedule a big event / party / workshop to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the History Project, as well as strategize/brainstorm for Year Two.
    - i. It was suggested that we might partner with Center in the Square as a good venue for our Year One / Year Two party. We should continue to think about venues... some place we can afford, yet perhaps somehow linked to LGBTQ+ history? (Remember that the History Project has zero budget!)

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1) Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 24, 5:30 – 7:30 pm @ Parrott Room, Roanoke Public Library.
- 2) Update the Digital Archives with items we have permission to post. Also look into tracking statistics of site traffic at our Shared Shelf page.
- 3) Follow up with Archives Collection Event outreach: UU; IP; The Park; RDC; MCC; and elsewhere.

- 4) Everyone please take a look at the Walking Tour script and provide your comments/critiques.
- 5) Finish writing “Overview” narrative for the Digital Exhibition, and share with project members for comments/critiques.
- 6) Begin conversations with Roanoke Pride about History Project’s plans for September 2016.
- 7) Have fun. Make Roanoke Queer Again. ☺

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

February 24: GR gives public talk about the LGBTQ+ History Project @ CoLab

February 29 / March 2: Training for student volunteers—how to process donations

March 14: Archives Collection Event @ RDC

March 23: “Reunion” Archives Collection Event @ The Park

March 24: monthly LGBTQ+ History Project meeting

Early April: Archives Collection Event @ UU church --- how about Tues, Apr 5?

April 10: next test-run of the Downtown Roanoke LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour

April 24: Archives Collection Event @ MCC

April 28: monthly LGBTQ+ History Project meeting—need to make decisions about summer plans by this date...

By May 1: deposition of oral history recordings and transcripts @ Virginia Room

By May 1: completion of a full draft of the digital exhibition “Coming Out”

September 4: LGBTQ+ History Bus Tour—by van?

September 6-9: Pride Week events? Launch of digital exhibition? Public talks / forums / workshops?

September 10-11: Pride in the Park Festival?

September 18: LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour?

September 20: One-Year Anniversary Celebration & Year Two Visioning Workshop?

September 25: LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour?